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EXAMINER

BASOM, BLAINE T

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2173

DATE MAILED: 03/23/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/000,150

Applicant(s)

BARRETT ET AL.

Examiner

Blaine Basom

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 January 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-45 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-45 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 19 October 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

This Office action is responsive to the Request for Continued Examination (RCE) filed under 37 CFR §1.53(d) for the instant application on 1/4/2006. The Applicants have properly set forth the RCE, which has been entered into the application, and an examination on the merits follows herewith.

Response to Arguments

The Examiner acknowledges the Applicants' amendments to claims 1, 9, 11, 16-18, 20-21, 27-29, 31-32, and 42-44, and also, the Applicants' addition of new claim 45. Regarding the pending claims, the Applicants argue that Hendricks (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,536 to Hendricks et al.), Imajima (U.S. Patent No. 6,211,901 to Imajima et al.), Colbath (U.S. Patent No. 6,728,776, to Colbath) and Yuen (U.S. Patent No. 6,687,906, to Yuen et al.), presented in the previous Office Action, fail to teach claimed elements directed towards determining at a terminal processing device, such as a set top box, that a video advertisement is not yet available, and elements directed towards identifying and displaying at the terminal processing device a banner advertisement until a real-time video advertisement is available. The Examiner agrees that the cited references fail to teach the elements of claims 1-10 and 43-45, which include limitations directed towards determining at a terminal processing device that only a tail end of a current real-time advertisement contained in a received video stream is available. The Examiner further respectfully notes, however, that the cited references are still considered to teach the limitations of claims 11-42, as is shown below. Moreover, the Examiner respectfully

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notes that that Applicants' amendments, including those involving claims 1-10 and 43-45, have begotten 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejections, as is shown below.

The Applicants' arguments have thus been considered, but are moot in view of the following new grounds of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 21-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Each of claims 21-31 is directed towards a "computer product," which comprises a "computer readable medium" carrying computer-executable instructions. The specification of the present application, however, expresses that such a computer readable medium may be a hardwired and/or wireless communications connection (see paragraph 26 on page 9). As such communications connections are not considered statutory, the claimed computer product of claims 21-31 is not limited to statutory embodiments.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In each of claims 1, 11, 21, and 32, the phrase, "or other similar processing devices," is considered indefinite, since there is no explicit recitation of what such similar processing devices may entail. As the remaining claims each depend on claim 1, 11, 21, or 32, and include all of the limitations of claim 1, 11, 21, or 32, the remaining claims are similarly considered indefinite. Further regarding claim 13, there is no antecedent basis for "the video advertising content." Regarding claim 27, there is no antecedent basis for "the program code means for retrieving."

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 11, 14-16, 18-24, 27, 29-35, and 38-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.

103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,211,901 to Imajima et al. (hereafter referred to as "Imajima"), and also over U.S. Patent No. 6,728,776, which is attributed to

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Colbath. In general, describes “near video on demand” (NVOD), which is a service for providing a specific television program in response to a request from a television viewer. It is understood that the content of such a video program is arbitrary and may comprise, for example, advertisements or other promotional information.

Specifically regarding claim 11, Imajima discloses that NVOD entails transmitting a television program simultaneously over multiple channels, whereby the program has staggered start times over the channels (see column 1, lines 45-52). In response to a user selecting the particular program at a “set top box” (STB), the next available and nearest start time of the program is determined, and the user’s set top box is sent data in order to switch to the proper channel displaying the program with the nearest start time (for example, see column 34, lines 30-59). While waiting for the start time of the NVOD program, the user’s STB displays a message indicating the amount of time remaining until the start time, in addition to a “service screen” comprising promotions related to the selected NVOD program (see column 17, line 31 – column 18, line 17: note that the service screen introduces “latest movies,” a category from which the user selected the NVOD program). Such content is considered a banner advertisement having subject matter related to the selected program. Accordingly, it is understood that the set top box identifies and displays the service screen, and at the time identified by the data indicating the proper channel, switches to the identified channel. Imajima thus teaches: receiving, at a terminal processing device, i.e. a set top box, one or more video streams from a video provider containing a plurality of video programs, whereby such programs may comprise advertisements; receiving at the set top box at least one trigger from a first video stream communicating with the processor, the at least one trigger defining a

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channel and a begin time when a first video program in the first video stream is to be displayed, on a display device, within a region of a display screen; identifying at the set top box a first banner advertisement having subject matter that is related to that of the first video program; displaying, at the set top box, the first banner advertisement within the region of the display device; analyzing at the set top box the at least one trigger to identify the begin time when the first video program is to be displayed; determining at the set top box that the begin time when the first video program is to be displayed has been reached; and upon determining that the begin time has been reached, transitioning at the set top box between the first banner advertisement and the first video program to display the first video program within the region. Imajima, however, fails to explicitly teach determining if the video program is available for display before transitioning to the video program, like expressed in claim 11.

Like Imajima, Colbath discusses the transmission of video programs, particularly over networks such as the Internet (for example, see column 1, lines 10-52). Colbath teaches that in such environments, there generally exists a waiting period before enough of the video program can be received before it can be displayed (for example, see column 1, lines 10-52; column 2, lines 9-36; and column 3, line 33 – column 4, line 18). To accommodate for such waiting periods, Colbath presents an “information handling system,” considered a computing system, which displays an alternative set of data, such as a related advertisement, during this waiting period (for example, see column 1, lines 10-52; column 2, lines 9-36; and column 3, line 33 – column 4, line 18). Accordingly, Colbath is considered to teach: receiving at a computing system one or more video streams containing a plurality of video programs; determining at the computing system

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that a first video program is not yet available for display; identifying at the computing system a first banner advertisement having subject matter that is related to that of the first video program; displaying at the computing system the banner advertisement within an advertisement region of a display device; determining at the computing system that the first video program is available for display; and upon determining that that the first video program is available for display, transitioning at the computing system between the first banner advertisement and the first video program to display the first video program within the advertisement region.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Imajima and Colbath at the time the invention was made, to modify the NVOD system taught by Imajima so that it may also be implemented over networks, such as the Internet, and thus so that any video programs transmitted by the NVOD system are determined to be available before they are displayed, as taught by Colbath. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to implement the NVOD system of Imajima in a network environment such as the Internet, because the NVOD system would be available to more users, particularly Internet users, as is taught by Colbath. Imajima and Colbath, in combination, are thus considered to teach a method like that recited in claim 11, which is implemented in a broadcast system that includes a program provider that distributes broadcasts to one or more terminal processing devices, i.e. set top boxes.

Regarding claim 21, Colbath and Imajima teach that the above-described system may be implemented using a computer program, stored on a computer readable medium (for example, see column 7, lines 14-41 of Colbath). Such a computer readable medium

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implementing the above-described teachings of Imajima, and Colbath is considered a computer program product, like that recited in claim 21.

Referring to claims 14-15, Imajima teaches, while waiting for the start time of an NVOD program, displaying a message indicating the amount of time remaining until the start time, as is described above. Consequently, the video stream comprising the NVOD program is understood to comprise at least one trigger, which may be analyzed to identify the start time when the video program is be displayed. Additionally, the video program itself is considered a streamed data file, and therefore, the above-described combination of Imajima and Colbath is further considered to teach that the video programming content comprises a package including a data file containing the video programming content.

With respect to claim 16, the above-described combination of Imajima and Colbath teaches: analyzing at a set top box a plurality of programs deliverable by a video stream, the programs comprising each a video content identifier defining the type of video content associated with the video program (see column 17, line 31 – column 18, line 17 of Imajima: various available programs are identified by their content, and displayed for the user to choose from); identifying at the set top box at least one viewer preference of the viewer, specifically the particular program in which the user desires, the at least one preference thus defining which type of video program content a viewer is more likely to watch than other types of video programming content (see column 17, line 31 – column 18, line 17 of Imajima: the viewer selects a video program); and retrieving at the set top box the first video program in compliance with the at least one viewer preference, i.e. having the name in which the user selected.

As per claims 18-19, it is understood that after a first NVOD program completes, additional data is displayed to the user, such as promotions for other viewable NVOD programs, as is known in the art. Additionally, it is understood that NVOD programs, being interactive – they allow users to pause the currently-viewable program for example, may comprise an associated timer that identifies the current segment of the program. Accordingly, the above described combination of Imajima, and Colbath is considered to teach: analyzing at a computing system a first video program to identify a stop trigger identifying the time when the video programming content is to cease being displayed upon the display device; tracking at the computing system a plurality of other triggers to identify the amount of time remaining until the stop trigger is to be received by the processor; and upon receiving the stop trigger, transitioning at the computing system between the first video program and a second banner advertisement to display the second banner advertisement to the viewer.

In reference to claim 20, Imajima, and Colbath teach: identifying at a computing system a video program, which may be an advertisement, from one of a plurality of video streams to be displayed; and in response to receiving a trigger, transitioning at the computing system between a banner advertisement related to the identified program and the video program, as is described above. It is understood to that such teachings may be implemented to select another video program, i.e. a second video program. Accordingly, Imajima and Colbath are further considered to teach identifying a second video program from a second video stream, and in response to receiving a trigger, transitioning between a second banner advertisement and the content of the second video program.

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Regarding claim 22, Imajima teaches, while waiting for the start time of an NVOD program, displaying a “service screen” displaying promotions related to the selected NVOD program, as is described above. Such content is considered a banner advertisement having subject matter *related* to the selected NVOD program (for example, see column 17, line 31 – column 18, line 17: note that the service screen introduces “latest movies,” a category from which the user selected the NVOD program). As the banner advertisement is related to the NVOD program, it is understood that it comprises some sort of identifier, in addition to its advertising content, in order to select the advertisement for display.

As per claims 23-24, Imajima teaches, while waiting for the start time of an NVOD program, displaying a message indicating the amount of time remaining until the start time, as is described above. Consequently, the video stream comprising the NVOD program is understood to comprise at least one announcement and at least one package, the announcement indicating the availability, i.e. start time, of the program, and the package comprising a data file containing the video programming content.

Referring to claim 27, the above-described combination of Imajima and Colbath teaches: analyzing at a set top box a plurality of programs deliverable by a video stream, the programs comprising each a video content identifier defining the type of video content associated with the video program (see column 17, line 31 – column 18, line 17 of Imajima: various available programs are identified by their content, and displayed for the user to choose from); identifying at the set top box at least one viewer preference of the viewer, specifically the particular program in which the user desires, the at least one preference thus defining which type of video program content a viewer is more likely to

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watch than other types of video programming content (see column 17, line 31 – column 18, line 17 of Imajima: the viewer selects a video program); and retrieving at the set top box the first video program in compliance with the at least one viewer preference, i.e. having the name in which the user selected.

As per claims 29-30, it is understood that after a first NVOD program completes, additional data is displayed to the user, such as promotions for other viewable NVOD programs, as is known in the art. Additionally, it is understood that NVOD programs, being interactive – they allow users to pause the currently-viewable program for example, may comprise an associated timer that identifies the current segment of the program. Accordingly, the above described combination of Imajima, and Colbath is considered to teach: analyzing at a computing system a first video program to identify a stop trigger identifying the time when the video programming content is to cease being displayed upon the display device; tracking at the computing system the first video program to identify the amount of time remaining until the stop trigger is to be received by the processor of the computing system; and upon receiving the stop trigger, transitioning at the computing system between the first video program and a second banner advertisement to display the second banner advertisement to the viewer. Likewise, Imajima and Colbath are considered to teach: identifying a plurality of intermediate triggers within the first video program, the plurality of intermediate triggers defining a plurality of time segments of the first video program; and tracking the plurality of time segments to determine the number of time segments remaining to be played to the viewer.

In reference to claim 31, Imajima and Colbath teach: identifying at a computing system a video program, which may be an advertisement, from one of a plurality of video streams to be displayed, the video program comprising video content and at least one trigger; and in response to receiving a trigger, transitioning at the computing system between a banner advertisement related to the identified program and the video program, as is described above. It is understood to that such teachings may be implemented to select another video program, i.e. a second video program. Accordingly, Imajima and Colbath are further considered to teach identifying at the computing system a second video program from a second video stream, and in response to receiving a trigger, transitioning between a second banner advertisement and the content of the second video program.

As per claim 32, the above-described combination of Imajima and Colbath teaches: receiving at a set top box one or more video streams containing a plurality of video programs, which may comprise advertisements; retrieving at the set top box preference data from a data source, the preference data representing viewing selections of the viewer, and particularly a user-selected program (see column 17, line 31 – column 18, line 17 of Imajima: the viewer selects a video program); identifying at the set top box a plurality of video programs deliverable by a plurality of video streams, each video program comprising programming content, at least one trigger, and a video content identifier (see column 17, line 31 – column 18, line 17 of Imajima: various available programs are identified by their content, and displayed for the user to choose from); analyzing at the set top box each of the plurality of video streams to identify at least one video program in compliance with the preference data based on the video content.

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identifier of the at least one video program (see column 17, line 31 – column 18, line 17 of Imajima: the viewer navigates a menu organizing programs according to their content, and selects a program); generating at the set top box a display screen having an region in which the at least one video program is to be displayed; determining at the set top box that the at least one video program is not yet available for display; identifying at the set top box a first banner advertisement related to the user-selected program, and thus in compliance with the preference data; while waiting for the at least one video program to become available, displaying at the set top box the first banner advertisement within the advertisement region of the display device; analyzing at the set top box the at least one trigger to identify a begin time when the at least one video program is to be displayed; determining at the set top box that the begin time has been reached; and in response to analyzing the video content identifier of the at least one video program, analyzing the at least one trigger to identify the begin time, determining that the begin time has been reached, and determining that the at least one video program is available for display, transitioning between the first banner advertisement and the at least one video program in order to display the at least one video program when the at least one video program is available for display.

As per claim.33, the NVOD programs of Imajima and Colbath, being broadcast (for example, see column 1, lines 45-52 of Imajima), are understood to be transmitted from a remote data source.

Concerning claim 34, Imajima discloses that NVOD entails transmitting a program simultaneously on multiple channels, whereby the program has staggered start times over the channels, as is described above. In response to selecting a particular

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program, the next available and nearest start time of the program is determined, and the channel displaying the program at this start time is made available to the viewer, as is further described above. Accordingly it is understood that the NVOD program, which may be an advertisement, is selected based upon the prior viewing activities of the viewer, particularly the time in which the user selected to the program to watch.

Regarding claim 35, Imajima teaches, while waiting for the start time of an NVOD program, displaying a “service screen” displaying promotions related to the selected NVOD program, as is described above. Such content is considered a banner advertisement having subject matter *related* to the selected NVOD program (for example, see column 17, line 31 – column 18, line 17: note that the service screen introduces “latest movies,” a category from which the user selected the NVOD program). As the banner advertisement is related to the NVOD program, it is understood that it comprises some sort of identifier, in addition to its advertising content, in order to select the advertisement for display.

In reference to claims 38 and 39, Imajima discloses that the NVOD programs may be transmitted via an MPEG stream (for example, see column 11, line 40 – column 12, line 2).

As per claims 40-41, Imajima teaches, while waiting for the start time of an NVOD program, displaying a message indicating the amount of time remaining until the start time, as is described above. Consequently, the video stream comprising the NVOD program is understood to comprise at least one trigger, which may be analyzed to identify the start time when the video program is be displayed. It is further understood that each of the video streams is analyzed to determine the video programs having an identifier, i.e.

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a name, that complies with the user's preference data, or in other words, that has the name of the program in which the user selected.

In reference to claim 42, Imajima and Colbath teach: identifying at a set top box a video program, which may be an advertisement, comprising a video content identifier in compliance with preference data; identifying at the set top box a banner advertisement having a banner content identifier in compliance with preference data; and transitioning at the set top box from the banner advertisement to the video program, as is described above. It is understood to that such teachings may be implemented to selected another NVOD program, i.e. a second NVOD program, wherein response, a second banner advertisement is selected and displayed before the second NVOD program is displayed. As such, the first video program transitions to the second banner advertisement, which in turn transitions to the second video program.

Claim 12-13, 17, 25-26, 28, and 36-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Imajima and Colbath, which is described above, and also over U.S. Patent No. 6,687,906, which is attributed to Yuen et al. (and hereafter referred to as "Yuen"). Regarding claims 12-13, 25-26, and 36-37, Imajima and Colbath present a method and computer product like that of claims 11, 21, and 32, whereby a television program is displayed on a display screen, and whereby a banner advertisement is displayed while waiting for the television program to begin, as is described above. Imajima and Colbath, however, do not explicitly teach that the program and banner advertisement are displayed within a box, like recited in claims 12-13, 25-26, and 36-37. Nevertheless, Yuen presents an electronic program guide, maintained in a

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mass storage device (see column 2, lines 10-56), and which displays a currently selected video program, like the NVOD program of Imajima and Colbath. Such a currently selected program is particularly displayed within a box (for example, see figure 2 of Yuen). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Imajima, Colbath, and Yuen at the time the invention was made, to modify the NVOD interface taught by Imajima and Colbath, such that a currently selected NVOD program can be displayed within a box of an electronic program guide, like taught by Yuen. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize this combination, because such an electronic program guide allows the user to search for other programs while watching a current program, thus creating a more desirable interface, as is taught by Yuen.

Regarding claims 17 and 28, the electronic program guide described by Yuen comprises a delivery schedule defining a time and a day for delivering programs to the user's display (for example, column 2, lines 10-28). Accordingly, it is understood that a user may view the electronic program guide to identify a currently viewable video program, the currently viewable video program comprising a start time and a stop time, and that the user may view the electronic program guide to identify a program next available after the stop time of the currently viewable program.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-10 and 43-45 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

With regard to claim 1, the prior art (i.e. U.S. Patent No. 6,201,536 and U.S. Patent No. 6,211,901) teaches "near video on demand," which entails transmitting a television program simultaneously over multiple channels, whereby the program has staggered start times over the channels. In response to selecting the particular program, the next available and nearest start time of the program is determined, and the channel displaying the program at this start time is made available to the viewer. Various promotions or advertisements may be displayed to the user until the start time. That is, the prior art teaches: receiving at a set top box one or more video streams, each on a distinct channel, which contain a plurality of real-time video programs from a video provider, whereby the programs are to begin at a plurality of distinct times; generating at the set top box, on a display device, a display screen having a region in which one or more real-time video programs are to be displayed; determining that a begin time for a current real-time video program has passed, i.e. determining that only a tail end of a current real-time video program contained within the one or more video streams is available; determining that a next real-time video program is not yet available for display based on content received from the video provider, in that a begin time for the next real-time video program has not yet been reached; identifying at the set top box a banner advertisement having subject matter that is related to the selected NVOD program; while waiting for the begin time of the selected NVOD program, displaying the banner

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advertisement at the set top box; determining that the NVOD program is available for display, in that the begin time for the NVOD program has been reached; and, at the begin time of the next real-time video program, displaying the video program at the set top box. Such real-time video programs may be video advertisements. The prior art, however, does not teach or suggest implementing all of these steps at the set top box, as is expressed in claim 1. That is, the prior art does not teach or suggest determining, at a terminal processing device, that a begin time for a current real-time video program has passed, i.e. determining that only a tail end of a current real-time video program contained is available, and determining, at the terminal processing device, that a next real-time video program is not yet available for display based on content received from a video provider, in that a begin time for the next real-time video program has not yet been reached, as is expressed in claim 1.

As claims 2-10 and 43-45 depend on claim 1 and include all of the limitations of claim 1, claims 2-10 and 43-45 would be allowable for the reasons in which claim 1 would be allowed.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Blaine Basom whose telephone number is (571) 272-4044. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Cabeca can be reached on (571) 272-4048. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

btb
3/20/2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Cabeca", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.